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AUTHOR Ogletree, Earl J.; Hill, Gwendolyn
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ABSTRACT

Factors that may influence teacher academic expectations include socioeconomic level, sex, level of academic and intellectual functioning, background information, and test results. In a study conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) on teacher expectations and pupils' intellectual development, it was found that, when teachers expected certain children to show greater intellectual development, those children did show greater intellectual development. The IQ test upon which this conclusion was based identified certain children as having greater intellectual potential than other students. Some criticism has been leveled at the Rosenthal and Jacobson study. Doubts have been raised as to whether teachers are trained to effectively administer IQ tests. If this is the case, results from such tests may yield subjective and incorrect data. It has also been pointed out that results of IQ tests may be misinterpreted. Teachers must be very careful in forming expectations for their pupils. (JD)

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PYGMALION IN THE CLASSROOM: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ISSUE

EARL J. OGLETREE & GWENDOLYN HILL

There is no other person in the school organization, that has as much potentiality for influencing children, good or bad, than the teacher. A child's primary relationship at school is with his teacher. It is from this pupil-teacher relationship that he will "experience growth and fulfillment or be stifled and damaged." (Gordon, 1, p. 310)

Henderson and Bibens (1970) suggest that one of the greatest failures of most teachers is that they expect "too little" of some students. For various reasons such as, sex, socioeconomic status, appearance, school performance, reading proficiency, background information, and achievement scores, teachers assume that certain children can not achieve at an acceptable level. "When a teacher expects poor performance and low achievements, he is not likely to be disappointed. The teacher has the power to shape student performances." (Henderson and Bibens, 2, p. 63)

Studies have been conducted to demonstrate the teacher expectancy effect on pupils' behavior. Beez's study (1968) illustrated that children who were expected to perform better were influenced by the teacher's behavior so they did perform better than those children who were not provided the same opportunity by their teachers. Palardy (1969) also found a positive relationship between teacher expectations and pupil performance. Findings from Palardy's study showed the following results: "When first-grade teachers reported that they believed boys were far less successful than girls in learning to read, the boys did

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achieve less well than a similar group of boys whose teachers reported they believed boys were as successful as girls." (Palardy, 3, p. 374)

A study conducted by Good and Brophy (1972) investigated the relationship between teachers' performance expectations and their behavior towards different children. The results suggested that teachers' attitudes toward children do correlate with differential teacher behavior. It was apparent that teachers liked students who were "bright and active, but also able to control their intellectual curiosity and avoid violating classroom norms by call out answers." (Good and Brophy, 4, 620) The "brighter" students were provided with more praise and attention and the rejected students received less feedback about their work, and when it was provided, it was more likely to involve criticism. Good and Brophy suggested that when the same child is viewed the same way by several successive teachers, it is likely that "teacher expectation can become a self-fulfilling prophecy and cumulative effects of systematic differential treatment by teachers, would then appear." (Good and Brophy, 5, p. 622)

Rosenthal, Baratz, and Hall (1974) conducted a similar experiment on black inner city children. Their research indicated that the greater gains were made by the children whose teachers showed "greater interest in children, greater satisfaction, greater professionalism, and greater enthusiasm." (Rosenthal, Baratz, and Hall, 6, p. 119) Teachers tended to become more active toward the children of whom greater gains were to be expected

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Teacher Expectation, Self-Fulfilling Prophecy, and Pygmalion Effect are terms variously used to imply that teachers and experimenters "produce their own reality commensurate with their own perceptions." (Braun, 7, p. 705) The teacher or experimenter's expectation of the students' behavior can become an accurate prediction of success of failure.

DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC

In a study conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) on teacher expectation and pupils' intellectual development, they found that when teachers expected certain children would show greater intellectual development, those children did show greater intellectual development. Rosenthal and Jacobson compiled their data in a book, Pygmalion in the Classrcom.

The TOGA test was administered to children in kindergarten through the fifth grade, at the end of the school year. Twenty percent of the children were randomly selected from each class. Teachers were told this "test of intellectual blooming" predicted that these children would show remarkable intellectual and academic gains during the course of the school year. (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 8, p. 66) The test was readministered to the children on three occasions. Results from the study indicated that the children designated as "bloomers" gained significantly more total IQ points and reasoning IQ points than the rest of the children. The greatest gains were found among first and second graders. These results were termed as the self-fulfilling prophecy, children

perform as the teacher expects.

Rosenthal and Jacobson suggested that the teacher, "by what she said, by how and when she said it, her facial expression, postures, and perhaps by her touch," may have communicated to the children of the experimental group that she expected improved intellectual performance. (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 9, p. 180).

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Studies conducted by Beez (1968) and Palardy (1969) lend convincing support to the teacher expectancy effect on pupil performance. Beez altered the typical teacher bias format by directly investigation pupil academic performance and teacher behavior. The results from this study indicated that teachers who expected favorable performance attempted to teach significantly more information than did teachers who expected less favorable performances. The methology of Beez's study differed from that of Rosenthal and Jacobson. More concern was placed on the actual acquisition of academic material rather than observation of teacher and children reactions, as in the case of Rosenthal and Jacobson's study.

Palardy (1969) also found a positive relationship between teacher expectations and pupil performance. The central purpose was to determine whether teachers' reported beliefs about first grade boys' probable success in reading had any significant effect on the measured achievement in reading that the pupils in their class attained. Palardy found that brighter students achieved significantly better than less bright students,showing a confidence

level at .001.

ARGUMENTS

There has been considerable criticism, as well as wide popular acclaim over the Rosenthal and Jacobson study. Doubts have been expressed about the initial study's design, data analysis, and interpretation (Snow, 1969); (Grieger, 1971); (Thorndike, 1968). The authors of Pygmalion, used TOGA to measure intellectual gains. TOGA has a relatively low correlation with other well-respected intelligence and achievement tests, and its norms for young children and children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are inadequate, according to Snow and Thorndike. There were unusual score changes, such as one pupil having a "pretest IQ of 17 and Posttest IQs of 148, 110, and 112. Another pupil showed reasoning IQs of 18, 44, 122, and 98. And another pupil had successive verbal IQs of 183, 166, 221, and 168 although TOGA does not have norms above 160." (Snow, 10, p. 198)

Teachers administered the test to their own children. Grieger raised serious doubts as to whether the teachers had received training in the administration of standardized tests. This could possibly lead to subjective and incorrect data. Another criticism concerning the teachers was the fact that they could not recall the names of the so-called "bloomers", and some said they did not bother looking up this information. Grieger argues that the teachers could not have expected different performance from children without knowing or being able to recall their names.

Approximately 20% of the original subjects were lost from the two groups. It was not clear, according to Grieger, whether they were lost from "one grade or spread evenly over all, or whether they generally represented the natural IQ distribution or represented either the high or low IQ subjects." (Grieger, 11, p. 79)

Thorndike (1968) also found the data analysis and reporting to be erroneous or misleading. Rosenthal and Jacobson stated that children labeled "intellectual bloomers" showed significant advantages over children not so labeled. Both Thorndike and Grieger noted that significant differences between the two groups existed only for Grades 1 and 2. No significant gains between the two groups in Grades 3 to 6 existed.

The children labeled "bloomers" obtained significantly lower pretest scores, according to Grieger. The differential gains for the experimental children could have occured as a "result of simple statistical regression effects." (Grieger, 12, p. 80) That is, the significantly higher posttest gains for the "bloomers" might have reflected their obtaining posttest IQs at a level most representative of their abilities.

There are several factors that may influence teacher academic expectations, which include, socioeconomic level, sex, level of academic and intellectual functioning, and background information. According to Grieger, failure to adequately demonstrate the teacher expectancy effect has been due to the inconsistency of researchers in dealing with the most appropriate variables for teachers.

"The IQ of a child is often not as understandable or as important to the teacher as is a reading list or a page of arithmetic problems. Since he typically has little formal training in psychology principles, he rarely has little idea how to translate IQ scores into classroom educational or behavioral tasks." (Grieger, 13, p. 88) Rosenthal and Jacobson used the IQ score as a variable, however, Beez and Palardy did not. Their studies clearly demonstrated the effect, concentrating on academic variables, according to Grieger (1971); Thorndike (1968); and Braun (1973).

There has been a considerable exchange of debate between Rosenthal and Grieger over the teacher expectancy effect. Rosenthal issued a reply to the criticisms made by Grieger, which included the following: 1) The teacher expectancy effect was demonstrated at the confidence level of .01. 2) Teachers were quite experienced in administering standardized tests. 3) Teachers could recall names of children involved in the study. 4) No matter what dependent variable was selected or how it was renormed, the results remained virtually the same. 5) In reasoning IQ, 15 of the 17 experimental classes showed significant results. 6) Many questions raised by Grieger were answered by Elashoff and Snow (1970) in their study on the effects of teacher expectations. (Rosenthal, 14, pp. 87-88)

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IMPLICATIONS

The teacher expectancy hypothesis holds important implications for careful teacher selection, particularly at the primary level because the teacher plays a big part in developing the learner's self-concept. The way a child feels about himself is most important in determining whether or not he can learn to be a good reader. A negative concept will prevent the child from learning responses which would help him overcome his inferior feelings according to Braun (1973) and Glock (1972). It is most important that teachers be aware of how they can "help their pupils build healthy, postive self-perceptions of themselves." (Glock, 15, p. 407)

Further implications relate to the teacher's sources of information which may be influential in formulating various expectations of her pupil. They include the following: 1) Derogatory label communicated by principal or formal teacher. 2) Uncritical assessment of cumulative records. 3) Ignorance of the limitations of intelligence tests. (Braun, 16, p. 708)

Grieger (1971) suggested the Teacher-in training spend more time in recognizing his own " motivations, feelings, and attitudes, in acquiring the emotional freedom to express himself openly, and honestly, in developing a behavioral style most conducive to dealing with children on a respectful basis, and in developing the security, strength, and honesty to always question his own reasons for thinking, feeling, and acting. " (Grieger, 17, p. 89)

Further research on expectations as they occur in the classroom needs to be conducted. Good and Brophy (1972) indicated that researchers should first begin to look closely at the teacher, student, and the factors that cause teachers to form differential expectations for student performance and the process by which this takes place. A suggested research program format should include the following: 1) The teacher forms differential expectations for student performance. 2) He begins to treat children differently in accordance with his differential expectations. 3) The children respond differentially to the teacher because they are being treated differently by him. 4) In responding to the teacher, each child tends to exhibit behavior which complements and reinforce the teacher's particular expectations. 5) As a result, the general academic performance of some children will be enhanced while that of others will be depressed, with changes being in the direction of teacher expectations. 6) These effects will show up in the achievement test given at the end of the year, providing support for the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' notion. (Good and Brophy, 18, p. 621-622)

In view of the findings, a conclusion can be drawn that teachers continuously form expectations of their pupils through daily interactions. And these expectations tend to influence pupils' performance in the classroom, which can either turn to success or failure. As teachers of young children, it is important that we help them to establish a healthy attitude about themselves, re-examine our own, and be particular in forming expectations concerning their progress.

FOOTNOTES

1 Thomas Gordon, T. E. T.: Teacher Effective Training, (New York: Peter H. Wyden Publisher, 1974), p. 310

2 George Henderson and Robert F. Bibens, Teachers Should Care. (New York: Harper and Row Publications, 1970), p. 63.

3 J. Michael Palardy, "What Teachers Believe--What Children Do," Elementary School Journal, Vol. 69 (April, 1969), p. 374.

4 Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy, "Behavioral Expression of Teacher Attitudes," Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 6 (December, 1972), p. 620.

5 Ibidl, p. 622.

6 Robert Rosenthal, Stephen S. Baratz, and Clay M. Hall, "Teacher Behavior, Teacher Expectation, and Gains in Pupils Rated Creativity," Journal of Genetics Psychology, Vol. 124 (March, 1974), p. 119.

7 Carl Braun, "Johnny Reads the Cues: Teacher Expectation," Reading Teacher, Vol. 26 (April, 1973), p. 705

8 Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson, Pygmalion in the Classroom, (San Francisco: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), p. 66.

9 Ibid., p. 180.

10 Richard E. Snow, "Unfinished Pygmalion," Contemporary Psychology, Vol. 14 (April, 1969), p. 198

11 Russell M. Grieger, "Pygmalion Revisited: A loud Call for Caution," Interchange, Vol. 2 (April, 1971), p. 79.

12 Ibid., p. 80.

13
Ibid., p. 88.

14
Robert Rosenthal, "Pygmalion Revisited, Revisited: On a Loud Call for Caution," Interchange, Vol. 3 (1972), pp. 87 and 83.

15
Marvin Glock, "Is There a Pygmalion in the Class?" Reading Teacher, Vol. 25 (February, 1972), p. 407.

16
Braun, p. 708.

17
Grieger, p. 89.

18
Good and Brophy, pp. 621-622.

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